

## SOM Week 15 Overview

### Readings

- Hebrews 7-13
- Spiritual Leadership by J. Oswald Sanders (Chapter 16-22, Pg 151-206)

### Teaching: Leadership in Ministry

#### Introduction

- If I am being totally honest, as I put this together I was really regretting switching Matt out for this. This was originally what he was going to teach on instead of bitterness in ministry, but I thought it best to switch him out since the young adults retreat is going on right now and it was important for him to be there
- And I really struggled trying to figure out how to teach on this subject of leadership, something that is so important and needed in life and in ministry, yet something that is also so dangerous and has so many pitfalls.
- See leaders have great capacity to do good and produce something in those they lead by setting the tone, and the example, showing the right thing to do, and drawing people closer to God, and yet in the same breath they are also held to a higher standard as they are unintentionally placed on a pedestal, that if they fall from that, they have capacity to cause many to stumble.
  - I was just in the gym yesterday talking to one guy in his sixties, casually mentioning church and just the business around it. And he asked me “what church?” and I said “calvary chapel”.. “You gotta be kidding me, my wife has been on me to go to that church forever!”
    - And we got into a conversation of how he was reluctant to go to church because after years of not understanding the bible there was finally a pastor who brought the bible alive to him and explained these truths in a way that made sense and clicked, to the point where he wanted to go to church, and then suddenly the pastor decided to move on and leave.
      - And for this guy that was heartbreaking even calling out the pastor for having such an impact in his life and now he was just getting up and leaving
    - All that being said, his faith and trust and his assurance should have been in Jesus not in man, but it is partially inevitable if you are not on guard and constantly pointing people to Jesus.
  - So as you are in a school of ministry, with the intention of serving in some capacity, whether it be in Sunday school, youth ministry, worship team, events, whatever the case, you have the ability and capacity to lead people.

#### Gift of leadership

- Now there is a gift of leadership that God gives- (NLT) Romans 12:8 “If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously. If God has given you

leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.”

- (NLT) 1 Corinthians 12:28 “Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages.”
  - Let's look into these verses for a couple minutes.
- God has given the church those to lead them. I can rest in the fact that ordination is not from men but from God, and that God has given to the church pastors and teachers. And those men are just undershepherds taking orders from the Chief shepherd who is the head of the church.
  - I remember being in staff meeting one time just going through the week and I don't know how it came up but Bobby said “I am not the head of the church, Jesus is the head. It's His church.”
  - Now there are some of you here who might be called by God to pastor churches and lead congregations, and I would tell you as Peter says in 2 Peter 1 “to make your calling and election sure.” you want to be sent, not went. You want to be called by God, because if you are not, it will kill you. And in a couple minutes we will look at the seriousness and the brevity of being a leader.
- So we have those who are called and ordained by God to lead in an official capacity, and then there are those in the body who are just natural leaders, people follow them and do what they do, and say what they say. God has just given them the natural talent of being a leader. If you find yourself in that boat, recognize what God has given and placed in you intrinsically, and use it for His glory. Use that talent to draw people closer to God, to set the example of walking upright,
  - as Paul said to Timothy, (NLT) 1 Timothy 4:12 “Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.
- And finally I think the last category is what all people should do and how all leaders should definitely lead. And that is servant leadership. Even if you are not in a position of leadership, even if you do not have a title, or you don't think you have the natural talent or gifting to be a leader, everyone of us can lead by serving others.
  - Jesus said it best in Matthew 20:25-26 “But Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant,”
  - Everyone of us has the capacity to lead by serving, and we all should as those in a school of ministry. Originally I wanted to call it “servant school” because that's what ministry “diakono” means, to serve.
- And before we move on, let me just add a note on the spiritual gift of leadership. I believe the bible is very clear, where God guides, God provides. He will never call you to something that He has not equipped you to do, or that He will not empower you to do.

Most of us can be on a poster that says inadequate, but there is nothing impossible for us when we stand in the power of His might.

- And if God calls you to step into a place of leadership(1, be sure that He is calling you, 2) don't seek it out for yourself) I would even pray and ask God to give you the gifting of leadership so that you can be effective in the place where you serve
- For the first year that I was ordained as a pastor, I felt such inadequacy and I still do- teaching and being a pastor. In my head I'm still a kid, I have no clue what I'm doing. How can I teach and lead those in the things of God?
  - So I prayed and asked God just like Solomon did 1 Kings 3:7,9 (NIV) "Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"
  - I just prayed- Lord give me wisdom and knowledge to do what you have called me to do. Because without you I cannot do it. And just stepping up and being available to what God has called me to do.
  - And I can rest in that I never asked for it, I never thought I would be a pastor, and God gave me a verse at the pastors conference that year during communion that first night. John 15:16 (KJV) "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."
- Okay so that's the first thing, leaders are appointed and called by God, there are those with natural talent or spiritual gifting to lead that can be used for the kingdom, all of us are called to lead by example, and finally be a servant leader
- Now lets look at the heavy part

#### The burden of being a leader

- James 3:1 "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment."
- NLT Luke 17:2 "It would be better to be thrown into the sea with a millstone hung around your neck than to cause one of these little ones to fall into sin."
- These are harsh verses here, James telling the church hey, for a lot of you its better not to be teachers, because you are going to be judged more strictly, and then Jesus saying its better to be thrown into the sea than to cause a little one to stumble.
  - Where the world exemplifies and idolizes leaders, I'm reminded of the words in a wedding vow where speaking of marriage it says "It is not to be entered into unadvisably or lightly- but reverently, discreetly, advisably, soberly, and in the fear of God"
- I looked up the definition of a leader, and it said the person who leads or commands, a group, organization, or a country. By definition both Joseph Stalin and Adolf Hitler were "leaders", but there is no comparison to be made to an Abraham Lincoln, a George

Washington, a Winston Churchill, or to compare leaders in the church- George Mueller, D. L Moody, Martin Luther, the Wesleys, and on and on.

- There are examples of failure of leaders in the bible that we should take under advisement, Aaron not standing firm on the truth and caving in to the people's demands to make them a god, building a golden calf to worship, Miriam caught in envy and jealousy of Moses' role, Korah causing dissent and rebellion where over 14 thousand people died. And you can follow the list on and on
- Something to always have before you as a christian but especially as one who leads is the fear of God. living your life in light of what God thinks and what His word says is a healthy way of staying on the straight and narrow path
  - But it begs the questions, as a leader or someone aspiring to be a leader, what's the goal? What's the vision? Where are you going and why do you want people to follow?
    - Forget church for a minute, and consider your home or job. You have the capacity to lead by example in the way you talk, act, respond, work, in the the way you live! Matthew 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."
- I believe that Jesus set the example and Paul follows it up- Jesus in John 13 it says "Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded."
- Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:1 "Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ"
  - That's what and how we are called to lead, to serve others. To be servants, to lead others in following Christ. To live and love sacrificially, to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, as it says in revelation "they loved not their lives unto death" but wanted to finish the course marked out for them, running the race with perseverance, and to attain the crown of righteousness that is laid up.

I texted a couple friends who all serve in ministry as I was putting this together, "hey give me your thoughts on leadership" and i love all these guys, but one of them in particular said to remind everyone- two words- its hard. Ministry is hard. Leadership is hard.

- Two of them mentioned the prophets who lived to honor God and testify of His word of which steven says in Acts 7:52 "Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?"
  - Isaiah cut in half, Zechariah whose blood was shed between the altar and the temple, and the list goes on.
- Moses the deliver, the great leader, constantly questioned and doubted, constantly complaining and murmuring.

- Paul, rejected, stoned, beaten, said in 2 corinthians 2:15 “I will gladly spend myself and all I have for you, even though it seems that the more I love you, the less you love me.”
- He said to Timothy in 2 Tim 4 “do your best to come to me quickly...all men forsook me”
- I just read an article on things that were in the pocket of abraham lincoln on the night he died. And one of the things aside from a pen knife and a handkerchief, and a \$5 confederate bill that was interesting was a news clipping.
  - This newspaper clipping was an article by John Bright now yellow with the aging of time, but said how Abraham Lincoln's presidency was one of great historical importance and vital to the future of the nation. Something we openly acknowledge now but at the time, he was facing harsh criticism as he presided over the civil war and the abolition of slavery.
    - Something about Lincoln reading that clipping over and over again and keeping it in his pocket as he remained steadfast through one of the harshest times of his life.
- And i bring that all that up to say- ministry is hard, leading is hard, leading can be lonely, having to live with the decisions you make. Having to own up and take responsibility for your actions. Being willing to walk the road alone even if no one is walking beside you. Being rejected and scorned by those you love and serve.
  - I'm reminded of the verse which states 1 Corinthians 15:58 “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”
- When Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire, and fire fell from heaven and consumed them, they weren't burnt out of ministry, they were burnt up. Sorry.
  - Moses tells Aaron, hey you can't mourn for your sons because you as the high priest will be implying that God acted unjustly.
  - Those in leadership are held to a higher standard. I think of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 “you are not your own? For you are bought with a price”
- Joel, why are you being a downer? Because I want everyone of you to succeed in the ministry and the calling that God has for you. Knowing that God is going to enable you and empower you, and do exceedingly abundantly above all that you can ask, think or imagine- but I want you to go into what you're doing with your eyes wide open.
  - I want you to count the cost as you put your hand to the plow and then never look back. To finish what you have started. I don't want you to come back to me in a year or five years and say Joel you didn't tell me it would be this hard.
  - But here's the gold- no matter what you go through here, no matter the loneliness, the hurt, the pain, Paul would go onto say 2 Corinthians 4:17 “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory,”
  - At the end of the day, even though Paul said “all men forsook me... The Lord stood by me and strengthened me so that the message might be fully preached through me”
  - Jesus will never leave you, and He will never forsake you. He will see you through every storm, every trial, every heartache and bring you out on the other side. He will give you everything you need for life and godliness, He will equip

you for the calling He has for you. He doesn't call the equipped, He equips the called.

Leadership(Here are my closing thoughts on leadership)

- The best leaders are first followers, the best leaders never wanted to be leaders or are hesitant to take up the role.
  - great book to read on leadership was Nehemiah, king's cupbearer, burden of his heart, he prayed, he was available, he put his hand to the plow, he finished what he started.
  - Joshua was the servant of Moses. He led the people in. Elisha was Elijah's servant. Joseph was the steward in Potiphar's house. And on and on. You have a desire to lead? Let that ambition die and learn what it means to be a follower, learn what it means to serve. And leave the promotion to the Lord.
- While all of us are called to lead in some capacity- whether it be our children, our families, at work, by example, not everyone is or will be called to a position of spiritual leadership such as a senior pastor. And that is completely okay.
- God knows the gifts and talents He has given you and where you will be most effective. Something we all can do is come alongside the spiritual leaders that God has placed in the church and in our lives, and hold their hands up as they do what God has called them to do. (Aaron and Hur holding up Moses' hands Exodus 17)
  - I love our church and the pastors here, but one person always stands out to me and I'm just going to brag on him for a minute- and that's Pastor Mike. Pastor Mike, who is a leader in his own right, godly, humble, wise, rightly dividing the word of truth, could have pastored his own church and been successful doing that, yet he has been faithful in his calling to serve as Bobby's right hand, and in doing so has held up Bobby's hands so that Bobby can focus on what God has called him to do"

Leadership is something aspired towards, not to be clawed at

- Perhaps there is a desire in your heart to lead, that might not be a bad thing. 1 Timothy 3:1 "He who desires the office of an elder/bishop desires a good work."
- It's a good desire, it's a good thing to aspire towards to lead. I would ask you, why? Do you love the preeminence like Diotrophes in 1 John? You want to be seen, you want to be a leader?
- I would search your own heart before God and check yourself for why that desire is there. And then after searching and confessing(cause we all have some pride and Diotrophes in us), just lay it before God.
- God if this is something you have for me, you make it happen. Refine, cultivate and prepare me for whatever you have for me. Psalm 75:6-7 "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another."
  - Let the Lord do what He will. Just put yourself low and serve. God will accomplish His purposes in your life and you will be happier that God did it than you clawing and scheming your way there.

Leaders are readers- something that has stuck with me.

- Every great person that has made an impact on their generation was given to discipline and reading. The bible should have the preeminence, but in a place of spiritual leadership? Read and then read again. Read commentaries, read biographies, meet with the minds of those who God has used in times past.

I'll leave you with this quote from my friend of what a leader should be "A man/woman who is constantly repenting every single day, who does his best to be wise but not to be wise in his own eyes. A man who strives to be closer to and more surrendered to Jesus Christ. Who can listen and discern, knows when to encourage, strengthen or admonish. A man who strives to put himself last when his flesh wants to put himself first. Is on the constant lookout for those he can discipline and encourage. Someone who intercedes for those in his circles and those under his care. A man who watches out for wolves and false doctrine. A man who is unashamed of the true gospel and preaches it every chance he gets. Looks out to stop division and bring peace and lasting unity in the body Someone who longs to and tries his best to spend more time in the presence of Christ."